



8 April 2003

MARINE SAFETY CENTER TECHNICAL NOTE (MTN), 04-03

Subj: PLAN REVIEW OVERSIGHT

1. Purpose: This Technical Note contains administrative requirements for Authorized Class Societies (ACS) that review and approve vessel or floating offshore facility plans on behalf of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). The intent of this administrative change is to effect a faster oversight turnaround time and begin the wholesale transition from a paper medium to an electronic (computer) medium.
2. Discussion: To expedite the plan review oversight process and address record storage and retrieval issues, the previous process of sending paper copies of approval letters, and transmitting monthly oversight spreadsheets, to the Marine Safety Center (MSC) is discontinued. Instead, the following process will be used by the ACS:
 - At the beginning of each project, the ACS will send the MSC, either on paper or in electronic format, a preliminary General Arrangement (GA) drawing of the vessel under review. The preliminary GA drawing sent to the MSC does not have to be the final, or "Approved," copy, because the preliminary GA drawing is intended to provide the MSC with a general understanding of the vessel's design. In addition, the preliminary GA drawing serves as a notice to the MSC that plan approval work is being performed by an ACS on behalf of the Coast Guard for a particular vessel.
 - Copies of plan approval correspondence must be sent to the MSC, via email, at the same time the correspondence is sent to the ACS' clients. Examples of this correspondence are approval letters for individual plans and any associated plan comments (exceptions, additional requirements, required changes, etc.).
 - The ACS will be required to immediately notify the MSC Technical Advisor, via email, after each plan is approved. This notification must contain the ACS' name, vessel name (or other identifier if the vessel has no name), a brief description of the plan, any comments or exceptions, and the date the plan was approved. -- The ACS may use electronic copies of plan approval correspondence as the required notification.

As a general rule, after receiving each notification, the MSC will have two weeks time in which to select the associated materials for oversight. After two weeks, the ACS can generally assume the MSC is not going to select the plan for oversight. However, the MSC reserves the right to request a plan for oversight even after the two-week period. These late selections usually involve requests from USCG Headquarters or a USCG marine safety field unit to conduct oversight for specific reasons. Copies of material subject to oversight are to be retained by the ACS for 6 months.

The MSC will notify the ACS, via email, of any materials selected for oversight. After being notified of the selection(s), the ACS will have approximately one week (five working days) in which to air-express selected materials and any necessary supporting documentation (i.e., calculations other plans, etc.) to the MSC. Note: The MSC is expanding its capability to receive electronic submissions. Until the expansion is completed submission of paper copies of selected materials will remain acceptable

As a general rule, the MSC will review all oversight material within 30 calendar days after receiving it. During this time, if the MSC observes that the ACS failed to detect an error (non-conformity) on the part of the plan submitter, it will notify the ACS via email. Subsequently, the MSC will engage the ACS in a dialog in order to resolve the failure to detect the error. Failures in detection that cannot be resolved at the lowest levels of either the MSC or the ACS (i.e., via an email) will be transmitted by a formal letter, between the MSC Commanding Officer and ACS Vice President of Engineering or comparable ACS executive. If the MSC later alters its opinion, it will use the same format it originally used to convey the altered opinion.

For an ACS that does not have Alternate Compliance Program (ACP) authority, but has authority to issue one or more International Certificates on behalf of the Coast Guard, the MSC expects only plans typically associated with each type of certificate to be approved by the ACS. ACS are to ensure that any plan review action beyond their authorities is not construed by submitters as acting on behalf of the Coast Guard.

3. Applicability: This MTN supersedes all previous guidance and administrative policy regarding plan review oversight from the MSC. The requirements of this Technical note are used by Authorized Class Societies in approving plans on behalf of the USCG. Refer to Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circulars (NVIC) 10-81, 10-82, 10-85, 2-95, and 3-97.

4. Action: Authorized Class Societies are requested to implement this Technical Note immediately. Any deviation from this Technical Note requires approval from the MSC Technical Advisor or his/her superiors. This Technical Note is available on the Internet at www.uscg.mil/hq/msc/mtns.htm

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